Unimas wins Excellent Water Industry Award

BY NG KIANG CHIEW

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) is the winner of this year's Pehin Sri Excellent Water Industry Award.

The award comprising cash prize of RM10,000 and certificate was presented to a representative of the university by Second Minister of Resource Planning and Environment Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah Ali Hasan during the opening of 'Borneo Water and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference 2012' at Pullman Hotel here yesterday morning.

The award is to honour industrial organisations, universities or research institutions for excellent innovative products, service or solution for sustainable water management.

Meanwhile, the nation's biggest confluence of water utilities yesterday was a three-day event which saw water utilities from 13 states, 80 top executives and over 300 water professionals in attendance.

The event was declared open by Awang Tengah, who was representing Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Organised by the Malaysian Water Association and supported by the state government and Sarawak Convention Bureau, the exhibition and conference offered practitioners in the water service value chain to get an update of the latest innovations in water technology.

It was also an opportunity to network, share knowledge and experience with other water professionals in the country as well as showcasing products and services, exploring business opportunities and deliberating on current issues faced by the water industry.

According to Malaysian Water Association (MWA) President Ahmad Zahdi Jamil, what started off as an event featured in conjunction with the International Water Association (IWA) Water Safety Conference (an event co-organised by the IWA and MWA in 2010), has now become an event on its own.

Water Engineering Technology Sdn Bhd, Exxor Technologies Sdn Bhd, Arachem (M) Sdn Bhd, Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara (SPAN), Dura-Mine Sdn Bhd, Ranhill Utilities Sdn Bhd, Weida (M) Bhd, AVK Valves Manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd, ABTP Marketing Sdn Bhd, Group Engineers Malaysia Sdn Bhd, ABB Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Chemkimia Sdn Bhd and Solidium Sdn Bhd are among the 15 exhibitors showcasing the latest innovations in water technology during the on-going three-day event.

Apart from the exhibition, leadership forums, training sessions and a Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara's (Span) CEO Meeting will also be held.

"The Span CEO Meeting will gather all water supply and sewerage utilities' top executives in one place and the two training programmes will run concurrently to cater to the local needs," said Ahmad Zahdi.

"The forum sessions will provide key learning points and promote the best practices for the benefit of the water supply and wastewater management industry in East Malaysia and the overall water management in Malaysia."

"The leadership forum with the aim of East and West sharing best practices in line with the theme of the event, 'Experience, Leverage, Sustain', will discuss operational management and efficiency in water supply management."

"The training programmes are designed to meet both water treatment plant operations and engineering designs principal in water supply systems and targeting various groups in the industry.",

"Specific topics of common and national interests to improve further our water supply services industry will also be discussed by the selected panellists," said Ahmad Zahdi.

The first training programme, 'Course on Water Treatment Plant' which offers a basic understanding of water treatment design and site installations is being held during the event.

The second training programme, 'Course on Water Treatment Design' is aimed at developing and improving capacity building to achieve a better level of service.

According to Ahmad Zahdi, the two programmes are unique in that they are the only programmes under MWA organised outside Klang Valley and made possible with the strong support from the Sarawak Ministry of Public Utilities, the Sarawak Government and the Sarawak Convention Bureau.

Ahmad Zahdi hoped that with the knowledge and information gained during the event, participants could apply them in their respective organisations.

"We also hope the sharing of experience would help utilities enhance their operations and that the discussions on common and national interest issues would generate recommendations which can be forwarded to the government for consideration," said Ahmad Zahdi.

On the Malaysian Water Academy, he said it would help to make sure capacity building is enhanced among the water professionals in the country.

The academy conducts certified programmes by the National Water Services Commission and all water operators have to send their representatives to make sure they are certified in their respective areas.

"We are getting good support and we hope the academy will be one of the best water academies in the country.

"We also hope to set up a permanent presence in Kuching as soon as possible. We will start with short courses and later on, a diploma programme," said Ahmad Zahdi, adding that to date, about 500 had graduated from the academy.

AWANG Tengah (second left) presents the 'Pehin Sri Excellent Water Industry Award' to a Unimas representative as Sylvester Entri (right) and Ahmad Zahdi (left) look on. PHOTOS: JOHN CHAN